

## Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz: Fighter for Affordable HealthCare



The only female member of Pennsylvania's 19-member Congressional delegation, Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D-PA) is widely known in Congress for her expertise in healthcare.

Prior to serving in Congress, Schwartz was a leading healthcare executive in Philadelphia and from 1990 to 2004 served as a member of the Pennsylvania State Senate. In 1992, Schwartz was the driving force behind the creation of the Children's Health Insurance Program, which today extends healthcare coverage to more than 200,000 Pennsylvania children from working families. In Congress, Schwartz has continued to focus on healthcare issues, including being a leading advocate for greater health insurance coverage for children. In addition, she recently proposed an amendment to reform the Social Security Act to make Medicare more accessible to patients and to protect enrollees from abusive marketing practices of prescription drug plans.

Schwartz is an active member of the Budget and House Ways and Means Committees, and holds a seat on the Select Revenue and Social Security subcommittees. She has sponsored legislations aimed at improving healthcare, veteran's benefits and energy efficiency.

Schwartz is also a strong champion of veterans. In 2005, Schwartz introduced her first bill, the *Veteran's Employment and Respect Act* to encourage employment of military personnel returning from Iraq or Afghanistan. Her idea, providing tax credits to businesses hiring soldiers returning from service in Iraq and Afghanistan, was included in part of the small business tax bill, which passed the House earlier this year.

Schwartz was heavily involved in drafting of the *Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Act*, which passed through the Ways and Means Committee on June 20. She has also introduced the *Buildings for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act* to provide more tax deduction incentives for energy efficient buildings. As a strong environmentalist, she sets an example by driving a hybrid, commuting using

Amtrak or the regional rail, installing energy efficient windows and appliances at home and staying a committed recycler.

In addition, Schwartz takes a pro-business stance and is a champion for business development, particularly in areas of biotechnology and technological innovation. She is also an outspoken critic of deficit spending. "We need to work toward a balanced budget to reduce debt because if we don't, we'll leave it to our children and grandchildren," says Schwartz in an interview with The Philadelphia Jewish Voice.

The daughter of a Holocaust survivor and Korean War veteran, Schwartz says that her parents influenced her decision to go into public service. "... I represent all constituents. I look for common ground, where we are, and how best to get there," she says. Her efforts have shone through the bills she has introduced in Congress and her involvement in critical national issues, which have allowed her to take on a powerful role in the Ways and Means Committee.